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SHORTAGE OF PHYSICIANS IN RURAL AREAS

Specific instances as cited in reports by FSA personnel
and correspondence from other sources

Missouri - In a six-county area in southeastern Missouri with a total population of 252,414, of which 163,144 are rural, there were 116 physicians - a ratio of 1 to 2,176 persons.

Ohio - In an eight-county area, having a total population of 217,128, of which the rural population was 158,789, there were 110 physicians, resulting in a ratio of 1 to 1,973.

West Virginia - In 28 rural counties with a population of 483,212, there were 198 physicians, a ratio of one physician to 2,450 persons. Of these 28 counties under discussion, in 14 comprising a large district, and covering 55 % of the total population (in the 28 counties), there was one physician for every 2,431 persons.

North Carolina - A recent report of the Duke Endowment lists 38 counties in which there was a ratio of one physician for every 2,418 persons in 1940, which by July 1, 1942 had become a ratio of one physician for every 3,121 persons. "Of the 179 physicians left in active practice, 83 or 45 % are 55 years of age and over; of the 83 men over 55 years of age, 57 are between 55 and 65, 10 between 66 and 69 and 16, 70 years of age and over."

South Carolina - The Duke Endowment report also lists 12 counties in South Carolina which in 1940 had one active physician for every 2,485 persons and by July 1, 1942 had only one physician for every 3,326 persons. Of the 65 active practitioners left in this group, 23 were between the ages of 55 and 65, and 6 were 70 years and over, resulting in a total of 29 physicians or 45 % of the physicians serving these counties, whose ages were above 55. (See attachment)

Kentucky - In October, 1942, Butler County, with a total population of 14,371, had only four physicians (one over 65), equivalent to 3 1/3 effective physicians, and resulting in a ratio of one to 3,414 persons. Several reports have referred to acute shortages of physicians in rural Kentucky generally.

Mississippi - There are 34 counties in the state, having a population of approximately 808,300, with 320 physicians, including the County Health Officers. Their average ages range by counties from 50.8 to 81 years. The ratio of physicians to population in these counties is one to 2,526 persons.

Nebraska - There are 93 counties in the state, having a total population of 1,315,834. Excluding four metropolitan area counties which include Omaha and Lincoln, there are 89 counties having a total population of 1,010,006

served by 581 physicians, a ratio of one to 1,738. In 26 counties the physicians are said to be virtually ineffective because of age and other factors.

Arizona - Pinal County with a total population of 28,841 was served by 13 physicians in April, 1942. Of these, 6 were serving 7,000 miners and 7 were serving the rural population of approximately 21,000. During the peak harvest season, there are 20,000 additional field workers. The ratio of physicians to the whole permanent population was one to 2,218. Of the 7 physicians serving the rural population, one had a full-time appointment at the State Penitentiary a second was the chief physician at the County Hospital and a third was said to be ineffective. Of the remaining 4, three were applying the military service as of last April.

Colorado - In six counties having a total population of approximately 41,038, there are 6 physicians compared to 23 in 1940. The ratio of physicians to population is one to 6,839. The town of Cortes found it necessary to close its hospital because there was no surgeon available to render service.

Wyoming - Sweetwater and Lincoln Counties, adjacent to each other, with a total population of 29,793 had only 12 physicians recently (compared with 24 in 1940), a ratio of one to 2,482 persons. Platte County, with a population of 8,013, formerly having 9 physicians, has 4, a ratio of one to 2,004. Weston County having a population of 4,958 and 2 physicians (5 in 1940), has a ratio of one to 2,479 persons.

Montana - The counties of Treasure and Liberty, each with a population of 1,499 and 2,209 respectively, had no physicians, in contrast to four in 1940.

Idaho - Two adjacent rural counties, Boundary and Bonner, having a population of 21,674, formerly had 11 physicians and are now left with 5; one for 5,987 persons in Boundary and 4 for 15,687 persons in Bonner. Of the four physicians in Bonner, one was in active practice during the summer season only. Therefore, the active practicing physicians total approximately 4 1/3, a ratio of one physician to 5,006 persons.

Washington - Yakima County with a total population of 99,019, of which 68,165 is rural, had 18 physicians, one half of whom are over 60 years of age. The ratio of physicians to rural population is one to 4,786. It may be noted that some of the 9 over 60 years of age may be ineffective, thus decreasing the ratio of physicians to population.

New Mexico - In a ten-county area with a population of 236,803, approximately 80 % of the 94 physicians are practicing in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Vegas, which have a total population of 128,127. The remaining population of 108,676 persons must look to about 20 physicians for most of their medical service, a ratio of one to over 5,000 persons.

Taos County, New Mexico, with a population of 18,528, has only two physicians, since two of the four who had formerly served the county, left the area. The ratio is one to 9,264.

Valencia County, New Mexico, with a population of 20,245 has only four physicians. Three of these physicians are over 65 years of age, leaving the area with two effective physicians, a ratio of one effective physician to 10,122 persons.

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2. The second of the following

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